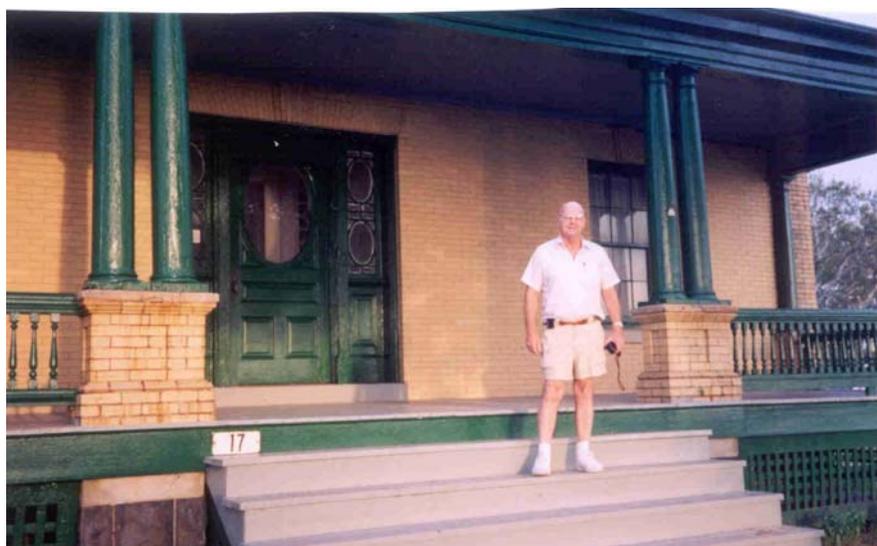


**Sandy Hook, Gateway NRA, NPS  
Oral History Interview with Harry Hanna  
Child at the Fort, 1931-37  
Interviewed by Thomas Greene, NPS intern,  
March 11, 2003,  
Transcribed by Thomas Greene 2003**



This oral history interview with Harry Hanna is taking place on March 11, 2003 at 10 o'clock A.M. at the History House on Fort Hancock at Sandy Hook, New Jersey. I am Thomas Greene a student at Monmouth University interning at Sandy Hook. I will be conducting the interview.

Question: Good morning Mr. Hanna. Thank you for talking the time out to do this interview with me.

Answer: I enjoy being here. Thank you for asking.

Q: Okay, let's start off with a few general questions. When and where were you born?

A: Jacksonville, Florida in the back end of an Army truck. Would you like details (laughs)?

Q: Sure.

A: We were stationed in Camp Gordon-Johnson, Florida and my father had a unit from Atlanta, Georgia. And we got orders to move back to Atlanta on about the 1<sup>st</sup> of December. So, by the time they got that organized and ready to ship out, we left on a convoy of trucks and at that time in peacetime Army, the officers and family could go with them. They assigned one Army truck to each officer. And (coughs) in so doing, we wound up in a truck, my mother and my father and I guess our orderly came with us. That's the guy who helps the officers. Usually it's a corporal or a private or something. And my mother decided to have me approaching Jacksonville, Florida. This was the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, which is my birthday, 1923. And they couldn't find a hospital, so, I was born in the back of a truck. While all this was going on, with the Army medics and they had the whole road blocked and the police came and they led us to the hospital. At that time, when you had a baby, a woman was kept in the hospital four or five days. And we had an outfit from Atlanta, Georgia, and here we are in Jacksonville yet, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of December. And these guys are supposed to get home for Christmas. And my father, instead of turning the outfit over to his executive officer and letting him get back to Atlanta, he held up the whole outfit when I was born for a week until she got out of the hospital. So, as you can see, I had six hundred and some guys hating my guts the day I was born. We progressed to that and then transferred up here and we went over to Fort Hamilton first in New York, and we had to wait while officer's row here was being refurbished and reconstructed. All the houses here are pretty much alike. Our house was the second one from the hospital, or base hospital, which used to be up by what was number one back then, and the base hospital has since burned and then was taken down. Boy, now number seventeen was my house where I grew up here in Fort Hancock, officer's row.

Q: Where did you graduate school from?

A: The Army shifted south. Well, we only went to the sixth grade. Then we got shipped to Leonardo School, which is Middletown Township, which is a receiving district. I was

there until the second year of high school, which is the old high school building right on Leonardville Road. And we got transferred to Fort Devens, Massachusetts, and I finished school up there in Fort Devens High School. And then I went to Rutgers for almost three semesters, almost two years completed. Then I went in the service in World War II, and I went in, of course like everyone else, as a private, and I got to be First Sergeant in nineteen months. And I wasn't that brilliant, but I had been raised in the Army. I knew the ropes, and I could recite the Army regulations when I was ten years old. So, they looked at my 201 file, which was like your personnel record in the service back then, and they moved me up to sergeant right at Fort Dix Reception Center. I had a whole squad by that time. And I knew the ropes. I used to sign my father's morning reports for his first sergeant, and sometimes he had had a bad night (laughing) and couldn't sign them himself. So, I knew the ropes and I became a first sergeant, and I did a good job at that. Then I qualified for Officer Candidate School, which you only needed 110 on your I.Q. to do that when mine was 145 or something. Yeah, 147. And we got shipped to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, which was the artillery training school for the entire artillery training service in the U.S. Army. And then we progressed to about the third or fourth week there, and it was my day as forward observer in training. We had a jeep, radio in it, two-way radio, and the captain alongside of me was my instructor for the day. You held your same rank in O.C.S., Officer Candidate School it was called. They produced "90-day wonders." That's what they called us after a 90-day course, we became second lieutenants. So, (coughs), the day of forward observer was the duty of calling back where the shell hits. If it's off the target like 200 yards right. 200 left. 200 short. 200 over. Then the guys on the guns, three or four miles back, would correct their air setting as it was called and fire the next one. They were coming over about every fifteen seconds. And the captain with me, there's one that was just a few seconds late and he says, "Where the hell's the next one at?" and BOOM! It landed about 25 yards to the right of my jeep. If you held a flashlight where that landed and pointed toward the jeep, I was completely in his shadow, the only thing that saved my rear end. This hand was in my lap with the microphone. This hand was on the steering wheel of the jeep. And this scar is still left, a piece of a shell whizzed by and just knicked me there, been a little lower and it would've taken the hand right clean off. It killed him, cut him to ribbons, dumped the jeep over on top of me, and blasted this eardrum. I have about a ten-percent loss of hearing in this ear. And it's not enough to bother with a hearing aid, but I took the test and a hearing aid wouldn't help because the nerves are destroyed and the reception there, no matter what they put in, would not be good. At least that was the E.M.T. specialist's opinion. So, you're wasting your money on a hearing aid because it won't help. Well, (coughs), I wound up in Lawton Oklahoma Hospital, which is the nearest town in Fort Sill, and then they shipped me to Walter Reed Hospital for the finishing touches when they tried to restore the hearing, put the nerves back where they belong, and all that. Then, I got out of the hospital after about two weeks. Walter Reed was a big Army hospital in Washington, D.C. And then, instead of going back to my outfit, which would be a normal course, now I was what they called then "limited service" because of this injury I couldn't go in combat, yet they didn't send you home. I had the limited service job. I held the rank and all, but they put me in a M.P. outfit. But I never got there for three months, because for three months they kept me in a hotel, Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. Everything paid for, free room, board, for all the meals I just signed for. I went to the Congressional

hearing every morning from ten o'clock until a quarter to twelve, and I was done for the day. They asked me a hundred times: "Tell us what happened sergeant?" "I don't know sir? I'm just sitting there. The officer with me says, 'Where's the next one?' and then BOOM! It hit over there and I woke up in the hospital." I repeated that same brief, little sentence, I guess a hundred times. The captain's father was a senator, U.S. senator from California, and he started one hell of a big investigation why his son got killed in a training mishap. And the bottom line turned out to be that he got no more than any other parent would get, the \$10,000 life insurance policy that you automatically got in the service. And he never did get final answers, but being in the enlisted world I got word of what really happened. They let these guys out on leave. They brought them back at three o'clock in the morning. This was a night firing problem, started at five o'clock and it was dark until about seven at that time. I think they misread the setting, a little crank with all the gauges, only you set the cannon and it raises up and down. But this was a case of short elevation and 200 yards, or 25 yards to the right. 25 yards wasn't too bad of a miss. It would have blown any building up where we were. It dumped my whole jeep over, but it was oh, a good quarter mile short of target where that shell landed. So after that 90 days, I got back to my outfit and the first sergeant is M.P. battalion. We should have had a sergeant major, but we didn't have one. The sergeant major was a master sergeant. The only difference between my stripes, three up, three down, and a diamond in the middle, for the first sergeant. At that time, it was just three up, three down for sergeant major. He didn't have anything in the middle. Today they have a star in the middle. They did something with it. So, I had 600 guys, a couple of lieutenants and a major, who was 35 years and young, already in the real thick of it. And we also supplied replacements for overseas. We had like a shipping depot at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and he signed about thirty of these shipping orders that said fill in whoever you want o get rid of in the outfit. I want you to get rid of two second lieutenants the same day. All they had to do was type their name in the top. It was already signed by him. Lieutenant, here's your orders and you leave tomorrow morning 0600. But it worked out pretty well. And next, they created a vice squad for New Orleans. Well, this isn't Sandy Hook, but I'll get through with this little story quick. We had to patrol the streets of New Orleans, taking care of all the Army violations, guys who had too much to drink and started fights and all that. And we started raiding houses of prostitution, and we couldn't kill them because you raid one on the first floor in this corner today, you come back next week, it's on the third floor. We used to have the girls examined, then ship them to Texas on freight cars, and Texas would ship them back to New Orleans. Anyway, (coughs), that took care of my service. I was in for another year, and they finally killed the limited service category. If you weren't ready for combat they sent you home, and I got discharged, honorable discharge. I have a discharge to prove it if they require any verification or anything. At Fort Hancock time, the time I was a kid, four years old we came up here. I remember an awful lot of it. This was my first real experience to be able to get out and walk around on my own cause you're on an Army base. Nobody could get on it unless they had sponsorship from somebody in there waiting to visit. We had a gate down there with a big cyclone fence and about eight feet of barbed wire on top about 200 feet into the ocean and 200 feet into the river, way out near the road where you came in off the bridge. But the gate wasn't two miles in like it is today. It was right back there. You had to go through that gate to get on and off the post. Of course, my father's M.P.s

knew me. That's the major's brat (laughing) take care of him. So, growing up here, it was an experience. It was like a playground. Point to the lighthouse, the Sandy Hook lighthouse, it's been moved back here now, refurbished and now doing the lighthouse keeper's quarters also like they used to be. That was part of my playground. The whole base was my playground. Potter Battery over here. We also had two boats a day. There was an Army dock here and the Coast Guard came in here a lot, had a boat down here but they didn't own the dock like they do today. (Coughs) And they ran two boats a day from here to Battery Park in New York City which we all rode free. Back then for a dime you were on the subway. Twenty-five cents you got in the movies, and fifty cents you bought three hot dogs and a malted milk. We lived like little kings around here, and they ran a bus in and out of Highlands on Saturdays for us if we wanted to play with civilian kids. And we could only bring the ones on the post that were vaccinated (laughs). They were great for sticking needles in your arm. And in the summer the depression was on some of the Highlands kids had it rough. I used to take three or four pounds of butter and a big roast beef or something with me from our commissary over here when I went to visit at least. I met civilian kids in Leonardo School, which is a civilian school. We had about twenty of us Army brats get shipped out there, and we were pretty well liked because we had been raised with discipline, respect, and all that. Teacher says something to us, we say "Yes sir. No sir." And they hadn't seen much of that out there in the civilian world so we were liked for that. And we were polite, but we were a tough bunch cause we had been skilled in boxing and everything else by the time we were six years old. So, a couple of the kids were being bullied we took care of them (laughs). And we had some kids there whose fathers were doctors and businessmen with all their money, and they used to invite us out for a weekend and (laughs) we just waited overnight for somebody. It was really strange. But this post at the time was basically a coast artillery base and the number one defense for New York Harbor. (Coughs) And at that time there was a railroad spur out here all the way. The train used to cross that old bridge, next to the bridge that goes now from Seabright over the edge of Sandy Hook to Highlands. Alongside of that you can still see the concrete pillars where the old railroad bridge used to be. They never got them out of there. And the railroad spur round all the way down here, and down the end you've got the roundhouse, you've got these big barns with the high doors. That used to be the railroad yard. And the engines would climb on there, and the time turntables would turn them around and face them coming out this way on that other side track. And all the supplies and heavy stuff came in by train. They also had flat cars with cannons on them. They were up to 8, 9, 10 inch. And they would come in revolving turrets on these flat cars. The railroad dragged them in, and they would practice shooting out toward the ocean. And they had tugs out there towing a big wooden platform about 40 feet long with a big red canvas on it. From out here it looked like a building. It really was just a big canvas with wooden frames, and that was the target. And once in a while they'd blow a tugboat out of the water by mistake. They sunk two of them out here (laughs). Lucky when it happened it was far enough away where when it banged up the hull the guys were saved. The crew, captain and two crewmen really they were. But that was the basic reason this post was here at the time, the number one defense for New York Harbor. And they had a big chain across the Narrows and lower Hudson River just about under where the Verazzano Bridge is now is the narrowest point between Brooklyn and Staten Island. And this big chain across there lowered all taut

because the string was just below the water or it could be let down until it rested on the bottom in big, thick links. And that kept the submarines out supposedly if any submarine ever tried to come up the river, we don't know. They got a couple of them off of the Atlantic Ocean coast out here down by Jersey, down by Virginia. But I don't know if any were ever caught trying to get into New York City. One of the things there was a big rum running problem during the prohibition time. The rum runners would get the booze in various places and they'd try to get into New York Harbor with these boats loaded with bottles of booze because it's such a market in New York City. That was where all the money was. And the Coast Guard would catch them out there and bring them over here to the Army dock. It's federal operation, Coast Guard and Army, and then my father, with his M.P.s would meet them there, and they were supposed to take it out on the beach and burn it to destroy the booze because we just had no room to keep storing it. I think sometimes they took some to Highlands and sold it, but I know they destroyed an awful lot of it, and they used to arrest the rum runners they caught on the boat, the bootleggers and all that. And then this place got to be a little fancier and they put details out cleaning it up. And we had a stable. The stable building is still there over here on the side. It's a corral over on the right side of it. They've rebuilt nit since and another one behind it. And they had a lot of mules, and the Army was just getting into mechanization at that point. We had the good Army trucks at that time, new ones, and we also had mules and wagons and the guys that picked up the garbage on the service roads behind these buildings and all the maintenance and all that. They all used a team of mules. And they had about maybe thirty horses to ride and maybe about thirty mules in that stable over there. And incidentally for the record here, they talk about horse sense. Horses have no sense. A mule is smarter than a horse. A horse you can give him a whole bag of feed and the horse will eat till he gets colic, which is a stomach disorder that can kill and him and makes him very sick. A horse cannot regurgitate. You give a mule that same bag, the mule will eat till he's full and walk away from it while a horse will keep on eating in drops. So, horse sense isn't all it's cracked up to be. The mules would break out of the corral sometimes. We were afraid of them back then. I don't know if they ever would hurt us. We used to run inn that big cannon down there, and now the muzzle is closed up to keep birds from nesting in there and everything else. But that was open back then. We used to crawl in there, three of fours kids, when then mules were around, till they were gone, then we'd crawl out again. And it was like a safe refuge for whatever was running around. And my father also played on the polo tea. You know that we had in the eastern part of the country. And a lot of their matches were held in Fort Monmouth, but he had four horses, and the Army took care of the horses and fed them, had the vet take care of them, and everything else. They kept them in the stable because my father played on the Army polo team. That's why they did all that. And the Army was quite proud of their polo team at the time because they won a lot of matches. Then they had absolute good care, and Army vets, and everything else. They were well fed. Where people in the civilian world trying to support six or seven horses sometimes had a problem in those years. (Coughs) The time President Roosevelt came this place was spruced up. They had white washed the trees for about three feet down the base of all the trees. There wasn't a cigarette butt in the street or anything else. And they gave the president a tour of the place, and he assigned some order at that point directing the Army to refurbish things around here, and after he left this place blossomed into a model post like West Point. We

were up at West Point six months also. My father was an instructor at the Academy for a little while up there. And that's a spit and polish post. I mean, you throw a cigarette on then ground you get locked up. But the Army was far different, and today the people you talk to who have been here from World War II, they're talking about missiles when the SAMS first came out. Surface to Air Missile. They call them SAMS. They had them up all over the place, up on the hill in the Highlands and Middletown, the parks, and everything. But before that, the coast artillery, the main defense of New York, they had missiles that would shoot planes down from over ten miles up. They didn't have that many planes flying around here. The Battery, Potter Battery out here, it's one of the gun emplacements that's closest. We played around here a lot, even when it was active. We couldn't go near it when it was firing. We were restricted from that. They had two other coast artillery batteries. I mean, barracks for these men were these big three concrete buildings across the parade ground, which is what that big lawn really was. Now, they didn't have a PA system for taps and revelry, the bugles had this big megaphone on a swivel, and they would take the few of them out to the bugle and blow taps or revelry or any other commands that they gave to them at that time. A couple of those guys were good. If you ever saw the picture *From Here To Eternity*, it was about World War II. Montgomery Cliff plays the part of the bugle. Now, either he could play that thing or they had somebody playing it like he's making it himself. One or the other. We had one bugle here who could play any tune at all on that bugle. He played the Army calls as you're supposed to, but he could play a whole symphony on it. You hear that going off at night and it put you to sleep. (Laughs) I fell asleep with revelry quite a bit or taps I mean. They played revelry in the morning. They had ditties made up for all the tunes. Like the chow call: dirty, dirty doughboy come and get your slum. That was da ,da, da , da, da, da, da with the bugle. Each one of them had some of them that colorful that you could recite in front of a woman (laughs). You want to proceed with your questions? I don't want to monopolize your program.

Q: No, it's fine. You're doing good. You mentioned President Roosevelt, could you tell the story of when you met him that you were telling me about?

A: Yes, he visited here in 1933. It was after he was elected, and the first thing he did was kill Prohibition, which was outlawing alcohol across the country. And the beer factories opened up. The beer barrel trucks were flying around like mad. His visit here was part of a visit to New York. He stopped off here because this was one of the main defense installations for New York Harbor. That's why he stopped here. And then my father was provost marshal, like I said before, was like the chief of police in a town. He was in charge of the M.P.s. He had an M.P. battalion here to maintain order and all that, and as such he was second in command as a major because the post commander was only a lieutenant colonel. And back then a lieutenant colonel was big news, but during the war they were all over the place. So, he was on the reception committee for the present. Of course, there was about fifty M.P.s around and everything. And they had the mounted M.P.s also. Well, they patrolled the beaches, but they're also for show in a situation like that. And (coughs) like a reviewing stand was set up over in front of what was headquarters building then. That side road here. The second big brick building. The first one was bachelor's officer's quarters. If you're an officer and you weren't married

you didn't get a house like this. You lived in like two furnished rooms over there. They took care of an officer. You didn't get a whole home to yourself. You had to have dependents. And we're standing there, and my father had me all dressed up in a miniature colonel's outfit, and the president waved his hand to come over. He was in a wheel chair most of his life. I guess you know that. So you went to him. He didn't come to you. And I just looked up at my father and he nodded go ahead. So, I went over and the president shook hands with me and talked to me a minute about your going to make a fine officer someday and all that. And I said thank you sir. And I walked back to find my father again. I never got to be an officer because of the shell that ran into my jeep at Fort Sill. I told you that before. Do you want it on here or what?

A: Sure.

Q: Well. I made first sergeant in nineteen months because I grew up in the Army and I knew the Army back and forward. I could recite the Army regulations when I was ten years old. And I made first sergeant and a couple of months later they sent me out to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Officer Candidate School. We called it O.C.S., which was the main artillery school for the entire U.S. Army. I was pretty good at math and that was one of the qualifications you needed to figure out flight patterns of the shells and how far they're going to go and the range and so forth. So, I was in there about third or fourth week and it was my day in training for forward observation. The forward observer sat somewhere between the guns and the target to tell the gunnery people whether their shell landed where it should, if it's 200 yards over, 200 short, 200 left or right or what, to zero in. When they finally got on the target then the order was fire for effect. Which the effect was to blow the hell out of something. So, my day up there for forward observer, I had a captain alongside of me, and he was my instructor for the day. And these shells were coming overhead and landing someplace up where they should up a quarter mile ahead of us. And I was calling back the instructions on where the shell landed to correct the firing. I was sitting in the jeep with my microphone resting in my hand on my lap. My left hand was on the steering wheel and this shell wasn't coming over and the captain just said "Where's the next one?" And he got as far as where's the next and boom, I woke up in the hospital. What had happened was they dropped a shell about 25 yards to the right side of my jeep, which was a quarter mile short and almost on target. It really should have been a quarter mile further. It dumped the jeep over on top of us and killed him, cut him to ribbons. If they held a flashlight where he was I would have been completely in his shadow. And I got a small scar on my left wrist from a piece of shrapnel that whizzed over and had it been a little lower it would have taken the hand off. And it blew my eardrum apart, my right ear, which I still having hearing problems. (Coughs) And I woke in a hospital in Lawton, Oklahoma which was the nearest town to the Fort Sill establishment. And then they sent me to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington D.C. I was in there for at least two weeks. And then instead of shipping me back to my outfit, they put me in a hotel and kept me in Washington for almost three months in which time I had to attend a congressional hearing each morning and they asked a hundred times, a hundred days, what happened. All you tell them was the shell was late. The captain went to say "Where's the next one?" and I woke up in the hospital. I had to repeat that same inane story for I guess about almost three months, almost 90 days. (Coughs) When I got

through with that they sent me back to my outfit as still a first sergeant. And they had limited service. They wouldn't send you overseas but they wouldn't send home either. But that particular escapade ended right there. I still was in the Army for a year and a half after that, various duties.

Q: Okay, now your father was in the military. Can you explain what role he played?

A: He was West Point and his father was in the Army. And he was (coughs), well before I was born of course, been in several, not wars, World War I was a big thing. He was just after that. But he did some of the skirmishes and down in Panama trying to track the guys who were trying to bomb the canal even back then. Back in the Phillipine islands before I went with him, when got shipped out again. And we got to Fort Hancock here, and he was provost marshal. His main job as ordered by the Army, was to take the M.P. service, from club-swinging big guys, brutes, into a more scientific and modern police force in the Army where you'd investigate what happened. You wouldn't just beat some guy with a club. You'd try to talk to him, see what happened, and see if he should be arrested or not. And to reform it into a more efficient and civilized type of police force even though it was Army. Because the Army M.P.s, they outrank everybody, especially in a time of war. I mean they go through towns. They convoyed us through traffic lights. They blocked the road, each road, with a truck, and the convoy just keeps going. You can't do anything about it (laughs), you can't fight the Army. And he got several commendations. I don't recall the exact specifics of each one, but he's well thought of. He's also friendly with George Patten, one of our famous generals. Patten gave me a collie for a present. A collie pup, because he had raised a couple of them himself. Patten was also wealthy in his own right. He showed up, if he wasn't on Army duty, he showed up in a private Cadillac with a chauffeur, which he owned. I mean, the man was wealthy. His family was wealthy. And I never met him, but Eisenhower was over here before he went overseas and became commander-in-chief of the whole European action. But I knew my father mostly as a chief of the M.P.s. His office is where the jail is now. They made a museum out of it, but it is actually a little jail. There's cells back there and everything. That was his office at the time. And another personal (laughs), humorous part of that I guess if you want to hear it I could put it on here?

A: Sure.

Q: We went back to Florida for a short time when I turned fourteen. Back then at 14 years old in Florida, you could get a driver's license in Florida at 14 years old. So, of course like any kid I was waiting in line the day I turned fourteen, (laughs), got my driver's license. No big deal back then, and I bought a Model-A Ford Roadster. I still have a model of that on my dresser. Thirty-five dollars and a Boy Scout pocket knife. And in the Army, the mechanics, because of who my father was, fixed it up like new. So I'm driving around at fourteen years old, with my own wheels, a Roadster, and I'm dating a girl that's sixteen. And we got transferred then, and the first place we hit was Fort Hamilton, New York. They were refurbishing these houses. Our destination was over here. Of course, when you are in the military, where you came from and where you're going, the credentials where you came from are valid until they expire. So, I could drive

around up here when we finally got back to Fort Hancock then, and it was still legal. But came December, my credentials expired and you had to be seventeen to get a license here in New Jersey and I had just turned fifteen. And we were also involved with New York, Fort Hamilton, where you had to be eighteen in New York. Well, I didn't like that for anything. I ran away twice, to make a long story short, and both times he came down and got me with his carload of M.P.s. They picked us up in Camden the first time and Virginia the second time. I was running away back to Florida so I could drive (laughing)! Anyway, he was really ticked off. I was grounded for a month. And then he called me in his office and said, "What have I got to do to keep you here instead of running away?" I said, "I want to drive my car." He thought that over, didn't say a word for about maybe two minutes, which seemed like a lifetime. I tell you, I thought he was going to say P.S. "Alright, be in my office 9:00 in the morning." I was there. He took my birth certificate out of the safe. He took me over to the post printing office. So, they had their own printing office on the post. Threw my birth certificate at the guy and said, "Make him eighteen." I turned eighteen. Wow! The spoiled brat was back on the road again. And I was never dishonest with it. I even waited till I was seventy until I collected my social security which you can do at sixty-two if you want to. So, I didn't cheat anybody out of anything, but it solved the problem back then. And my credentials are read three years older than I really am. But that's just a little personal story. What's your next?

Q: Okay, did you know anything about Fort Hancock before you came here?

A: No. I came when I was just four years old. It was just one big playground to me.

Q: Okay, so you came when you were four years old and you stayed until, what'd you say, about eighteen?

A: Almost eighteen. Yeah.

Q: And did you have any certain chores or jobs that you had to perform while you were here?

A: Oh yeah, they took us to the civilian world as we called it, anything outside the base. I worked on a farm part of one summer picking strawberries in a basket. We got two cents a quart. (Laughs) That was like seventy-five cents a day. That was big money for a kid back then. I worked in a bakery in Red Bank. It was nights, like 8:00 at night till 1:00 in the morning. My father used to send the car out to pick me up and bring me home because I wanted to work, big shot. Well, I got so sick of eating too many jelly donuts (laughs) that job didn't last. And I helped clean up the theatre, which is down here, this big brick building. I had two shows a night there, and we used to get in, kids for nothing. And we'd stay and see the second show sometimes, just a repeat of the first one. And they had special events here for kids on the weekends and all. But I helped clean that up. I got two dollars for that, all day Saturday. Swept between the seats. We used to have to scrape the gum off the bottom of the seats, which I helped put there. How do you like that? But the opportunities to work on the post weren't too great because

everything was done by the Army, and the sergeant's wives... Sergeant's Row is over there behind the, what's the commissary, four or five houses that are duplex style. And their wives used to do the laundry for the officers and get paid for it. Extra money for them. And a lot of them, I didn't have a mother around, they were divorced around the time we got here. That's another story. And they took good care of me. They always invited me in for pie and cake and all that stuff, but being the provost marshal's son probably helped a lot. And maybe it wasn't that, but they treated me real well. They were divorced when I was four years old, and I didn't know the real reason until I was about ten or eleven years old. Apparently, one of the staff officers resigned his commission and my mother took off with him. His family owned a big leather tannery in Pennsylvania, middle of Pennsylvania, way up on the northern border near New York in a town called Elkland. I guess a lot of elks used to roam around there. And the big factory that owned the town owned all the houses, the factory-town, you lived in a factory-house, the factory-store, you signed for anything you wanted and they took it out of your pay each week. I think they just about got two dollars in pay and the rest went to the company store. But she wanted me to come out and visit, but he would let me go of course, he was afraid they'd snatch me during the visit. I was about ten years old because his family ran money through the courts and got a federal court order to let me visit her out there at her home in Elkland. So, they decided you better comply with that. So, they sent me out there with two armed M.P. bodyguards with orders to stay with me. One was to be awake at all times. If they took me out to eat they were to go and sit in the same restaurant. If I went to the bathroom, they sat outside the bathroom door until I got out. I was out there for four days. I was like a circus freak. Everybody in town looked at me. Went to a restaurant or something (laughs) and there's two armed M.P.s and a military staff car in every place they went. These guys (laughs), if they tried to snatch me, they had orders to shoot whoever it was. My father was very leery of them snatching me because of all the money, and they could afford to go anywhere and things like that. But that was the first time I saw my mother and she died when I was in the service myself during World War II. We were on maneuvers in the bayou swamps in Louisiana and the Red Cross couldn't find us. Their job was to find us, you get a pass, and you go home to the funeral or something. They couldn't find me until ten days after the funeral, so the Army gave me a week's pass anyway. And I went back home, visited friends and all. I had nothing else to do with it. The funeral was all over. I didn't have the attachment to a mother that a normal son might have because we had been separated since I was four years old.

Q: Were there ever any alerts of potential enemy attacks while you were here?

A: No, because before World War II, there wasn't much of a threat here at all. These guys kept busy with practice shooting at tugboat targets out there in the ocean. Stuff like that. And I was blown out of here by the time World War II started. I had moved to Boundbrook and I rented a small house there with another friend of mine and we worked there until I went into the service. I didn't go in until the tail end, beginning of 1943. And (coughs), I would have gone into the Air Force but I had an operation prior to this when I was a kid, and that left that ear even more sensitive than what it would have been normally from that shell that landed by the jeep. (Coughs) The base hospital here

checked it out. All this base hospital did here was take out tonsils and adenoids and maybe an appendectomy once in a while on an emergency basis. Anything serious they sent to Fort Jay on Governor's Island. It's a little island right off of Battery Park. You've probably heard of it. Now I think they're going to give it to New York City after all these years. Fort Jay Hospital was a main super hospital and they did the operation and any other serious medication required. Fort Jay was the headquarters for the second serviceman and it took it in the whole eastern part of the country, about six or eight states. Governor's Island is not Army anymore now. At that time it was a big deal. You had to take a ferry to get there, you know, from Battery Park.

Q: What building did you live in again?

A: Here?

Q: Yeah.

A: Seventeen. At that time it was the second house from the base hospital with that big open area where you come in now. There's a Fort Hancock sign with a missile pointing to the sky. Well, that whole area is about three acres I guess. It was the base hospital. And then the colonel commanding officer's house was naturally after that one. Number one. And ours was number two at the time. They changed the numbers since. It's now seventeen. That's the house that I lived in.

Q: Where did you eat?

A: Usually at the officer's mess. I'd meet my father there for a meal in the morning. I'd start out there before I left for school and so forth. We had a maid service, but she wasn't everyday. She was here sometimes. She'd make some kind of a dinner, but most of the time we ate over at the officer's mess. The officer's mess is the officer's dining room. They call it a mess in the Army. A mess hall is a kitchen or where you eat in the barracks is called a mess hall.

Q: Did you get to attend religious services here?

A: Yes, we went to a local all denomination little church over there. And we had to be fully dressed, class, our uniform, and everything. They had a small academy here for a while. It didn't last. About the time I moved they folded it I guess, too expensive.

Q: While you were at Fort Hancock, did you ever go to the beach?

A: Oh yeah, we were over the beach all the time. We had the whole ocean strip out there. Seven miles. Private business. Civilians couldn't get on. Even though the guy landed a private boat, they'd lock him up and haul him in until they found out what he was doing here. And the M.P.s patrolled the beach on horseback, my father included sometimes. He'd take a ride out there. I learned to ride Army horses by the time I was six years old. And I knew how to clean them up, hose them down, kerry comb and the

whole bit. And I did a lot of riding at that time. Saturday afternoons, Sunday afternoons, the horses weren't assigned, and we were entitled to exercise them. To keep them healthy, some of the soldiers, above privates, they'd give us a dime to ride their horse for two hours instead of them. They didn't want to do it. So I got a lot of horseback riding (laughing), and I sometimes got paid for it.

Q: Now did you ever take excursions to New York City?

A: Oh yeah, we had two boats a day out here. Only left here around 5:30 in the afternoon and left New York again at 11:00. They gave you time to go to a show, a movie, whatever. They'd serve you coffee and donuts on the way up and on the way back. And the other one left at 8:00 in the morning. These were Army Ordinance boats. They also were buoy tankers. That type of ship. I could draw you a little sketch of it if you want to see what it looked like?

Q: Sure.

A: And the grappling hook on there for the buoy. This is like a boomer. Highland house was there. This is all cabins where we sat and a couple of lifeboats up on the top. And an anchor and everything. They did about eight or twelve knots. They weren't really speedy, but it only took an hour. You were having coffee and donuts, watching the sights, a big ship, you're out in New York Harbor. And back then New York Harbor was busy. Today you see a cruise ship maybe once a week in the summertime. Back then you had to go around all of these big ships. They didn't offer any sea traffic. And that's what the Army boats looked like at the time.

Q: Overall, you felt Fort Hancock, you know, living and growing up here was a fun place to be?

A: Oh yeah. It was like your own private playground. And we'd climb up the lighthouse with binoculars up there and watch the world go by. We'd go out to the range and watch them fire the big cannon. I learned how to fire an Army 45 Colt, which was a firearm for the Army for years. By the time I was seven, eight years old my father took me out to the range. I knew how to load them, how to make them safe, and clean them, the whole bit. I cleaned all of his guns. When he came back from the range I had to clean them. (Coughs) Now I knew where they all were in the house but I didn't touch them unless I was authorized to or we were going to the range or something like that. I had one other experience with my father. He was a fencing instructor also up at West Point. Down here they didn't bother with it. We got in a heated argument when I was about fifteen or sixteen I guess. And after I had my car back again and my license I stayed out a little later than I should have. And we got in a big argument about it. And over what they call the sideboard, like that, there were cross sabers up there where that mirror is. Regular Army used them and they were held in brackets and sometimes they carried them on your hip in ceremonial occasions. Boy, we had gone at it for a while. I don't know, I guess I went nuts. So, I grabbed a saber off the wall and went after him.

Well, he walked around the table this way. He grabbed the other one off the wall. I got my rear end paddled fifteen times before I could turn around. (Laughing) He was a master at that stuff. And I learned something then, when you grab a sword off the wall and go after somebody, you take the other one and throw it out the window right away. That's the biggest lesson. We patched that up. I was grounded (laughs) for another month. Then while I was grounded, we had big trellises here on the side. They're not here anymore. They took them down and they tend to decay I guess around the bricks and the wooden moldings around the outside of the house. So, this trellis was like a ladder. So, I go up here and be real quiet. He'd take a look in a half-hour later and I'd pretend to be sleeping. He'd go to bed. Well, the windows were open in the summertime anyway, I opened the screen would slide out, and I'd climb down and go out and play with the kids for a while. Now usually I'd be back by midnight. We got out at seven o'clock one night. We went to two movies. I come back. I went to the house. I thought it was the wrong house. The trellis is gone (laughing). He had a couple of the G.I.s come up about 7:30 at night and take the whole damn thing down. I couldn't get back in the house (laughing). The door was locked. I had to bang bang with the bell. I was grounded another month. But that wasn't fair to take that thing down like that.

Q: Do you have any other stories about humorous things that went on here?

A: Oh yeah. Well, we played cowboys and Indians on real horses as I told you, and the other kids could ride too. On Saturday afternoon, Sunday, the guys were usually off on pass. So, there was nobody using the horses for any military duties or whatever. So, we had riding privileges. All of us had qualified to ride a horse. And most of us could swim a horse. Take him out in the water, swim a ways, and come back. You need a certain knack to get a horse to do that. And we were playing cowboys and Indians and I don't know, the Indians are supposed to ride along this service road behind these houses here where the garbage guy came. They had coal furnaces then. A little coal wagon would come by with two mules and they'd dump coal in through that window in the coal bin the cellar. And the orderly who took care of the fire, which used to heat all these buildings, would shove the coal into the furnace in that bin in the cellar. It went in through the window. Well anyway, the six guys playing Indian for the day are riding along here and are supposed to stay on the service road. They got off and crossed the parade ground. And it rained like hell the day before so it was kind of wet. And they're going over toward those big barracks on that side and right in between them out toward the beach. Well, I get my cowboys and go "Let's go get them!" We go sailing across the parade ground to. You take twelve horses riding like hell across a wet area like that, we kicked up what the call divots, pieces of the ground or lumps. We tore up the damn parade ground. Of course, there was no trouble finding out who did it all. I took the hit for that one because I was leading the cowboys across. They didn't blame the Indians at all. And I was grounded another month with orders to keep the horse off the playground after this. Those stupid little things you do as a kid. The other too I hated to see here coming back, and I've been back several times looking it over. I came to a couple of their functions when they had their celebrations. This place used to be loaded with holly trees, real productive holly trees. Big red berries, you could see them one hundred yards away. You could see big red berries on them. And beach plum bushes. Beach plums are a tasty

thing like a grape but they don't grow in a bunch like a grape. They grow more separately. And the sergeants' wives, the Army wives, used to make preserves out of these beach plums. And the holly you could trim and make a wreath out of it. You trimmed it right you didn't hurt the tree. They opened it up to the civilian world and Gateway Park. And these people come down from New York, Brooklyn, and Jersey City and started cutting the holly tree branches off to take home and plant. And holly grows in sand and these people didn't know that. Sandy soil. They were dying anyway, they'd just throw them in the garbage. But they wrecked a lot of the holly trees before they started putting some of those areas off limits. And they ripped the beach plum bushes out. Thank God you could grow them back. They grow in sand to because it's a whole sandy peninsula here. So, the destruction there was so evident I guess the government finally did something about it. I see some beach plums bushes out there now that are starting to bloom again. They nearly wrecked the place then. They wrecked some of these homes climbing in through the windows, having parties in here, everything else. There's no real guards serving here. There's security out here, but there's no real guards. The rangers, there's only three rangers, and they're out there by the gated checking traffic. And you get a bunch of kids here from the city in one of these houses and you could imagine what they could do to it pretty quick.

Q: Do you keep in touch with anyone who you grew up with?

A: The only one I kept in touch with and I guess he died about six, seven years ago was a guy named Cliff Simpson. His father was a telegraph operator here. They had a regular telegraph Western Union station. He was a civilian, but he was employed by the Army as a telegraph operator. He and I buddied around quite a bit. He's the one who ran away with me to Florida each time with the car. And he wanted to get a license when we got down there because he had turned fourteen but (laughs) we never got that far.

Q: Did you know of any servants, minorities, or women who worked at the fort?

A: I never saw a black man in Fort Hancock in all those years. Some of the services had them working here, but we didn't have them in the Army then. They had their own barracks and everything. Segregation was still the rule. And city garbage trucks, the big ones that would come in and pick up garbage, and some of the service trucks, the Electric Light Company, stuff like that, would come in. Oh the railroad too. we had a railroad spur here too I told you. It went all the way out to Seabright. It was really a Seabright tour, but they had it branch off and come all the way into the Army all the way from where the brown houses are that I told you about. And the Jersey Central Railroad ran that at the time and they did have some colored employees. But as far as being stationed in the Army or any in the Army personnel, I never saw any then. Middle of World War II, they finally got it desegregated I think.

Q: Did you take part in any sports while you were here?

A: Oh, we played soccer but nothing really organized. We didn't have an inter-fort soccer league or football league or anything like that. We played amongst ourselves,

soccer mostly. It was out in Leonardo, they sent us out there to civilian school until we left for Fort Devens. We played soccer there, and I went out for football. But I could run like a deer, but I was so light if I got tackled I lost six yards. I didn't make out too well.

Q: Was there anyone when you were growing up that you particularly admired or looked up to whether it was just a relative or a movie star or ...?

A: Tom Mix and Roy Rogers. I mainly watched the western cowboy pictures that they showed when they came in. And I had a wild crush on Elizabeth Taylor. I guess a lot of guys did at that age. We were pretty close to the same age I guess. I wrote her a couple of letters. I got one answer, but she never showed up from New York when she was supposed to so I didn't get to meet her. Oh, there's another girl I did meet, a real soprano Diana Dermitt. She played in a movie called *Three Smart Girls*. I fell in love with her in the movies (laughs). I guess I was about fifteen or sixteen then. She was probably about two years older. That was about all on the celebrity status. Of course I read. A required reading was all the history of the generals and Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant. We had our own generals that we knew who was making history like Patten over there in Europe. Eisenhower. Marshall was chief of staff. Douglas MacArthur. I never met MacArthur but we all knew him and his life history. It was required reading. And I found out something else too. It wasn't that funny, pineapple juice and pineapples. I used to love them. I could drink a gallon of pineapple juice when I lived here at the fort. And we left to go to the Philippines and the troop ship landed at Hawaii. And we were stationed at Schofield Barracks for about three months. And of course that's pineapple country. And when we left there I couldn't stand to even look at another pineapple again. I drank so much I got sick of it. I don't think I bothered with a glass of pineapple juice for three or four years after that.

Q: Now, you said that you spent some time at the Panama Canal.

A: Yes, Baton Locke.

Q: Do you want to talk about that for a few minutes?

A: Well, it's a small town like a post. It's a military post. It's restricted to civilians other than those who worked on the base. They had to be ID'd, checked, background, everything even then. And we could ride the engine sometimes. The engineer would let us. We had two engines on the side with pulleys. They were real heavy things. Railroad tracks on both side of the canal. And the guy that worked the Locke would let us work the lever sometimes and let the water in, let the water out, whatever. And as I said, the canal faces north and south, not east and west. A lot of people don't know that. And we used it for a swimming pool. We weren't supposed to. They'd just chase us out when they caught us, But I don't think I have the nerve (laughing) to jump forty feet off a ledge that went to the water like I did back then. When you're a kid you don't care about it. And I remember it was hot and sticky, and we had bugs. Oh we had bugs. Once in a while a mall boa constrictor would wind up in one of the barracks or one of the homes somewhere. The ones that would do that were so small that they weren't any danger.

They didn't have a poisonous bite or anything. The big ones had enough sense to stay away from people I guess. I never saw a real big one. There were some monkeys there. They'd come through looking for food sometimes, but nothing really attacking us or anything like that. The poisonous snakes they had cleared out of the Army area pretty well. There was some kind of spray that they shot up underneath the houses and crawl spaces that would drive anything out of there alive or kill it, one or the other. They kept our little rear ends pretty safe down there. And the rest was just like living in a town, only a hot town. They had a theater down there at the pot like we had here. They had all the entertainment. I didn't get to know too many kids who were born and brought up down there because they weren't allowed on the post. They weren't vaccinated. They were considered a source of contamination or disease or something. Maybe they weren't, but that's the way the Army looked at it. The town wasn't that much. We went to the local PX that had a movie or the pot that played first class films all the time. We had no reason to really go to that little town down there, Baton Locke Village. But at the time we were there, for over a year I guess, I was ready to come home. The first two months was a novelty. "The Big Ditch" you know (laughing) we called it, watching the ships go through. Sometimes, the ships depending on the height of the water, would be like ten feet out there. They'd dive on the boat. They'd throw us an orange or grapefruit or something and we'd catch it just like a baseball. But it was really no joy living in Panama, other than the swimming novelties.

Q: Let me just ask... when you look back at your life at Fort Hancock and everything you experienced, what is the one main thing that you got out of living here? Is there anything that helped you in your future life?

A: Discipline. I was taught to say "yes sir" "no sir" to adults, my elders, and so forth. That helped a lot. It got engrained in the habit of life. In school it was a big help. All our "Army brats" as we were called, when teachers spoke to us we "yes sir" "no sir", and we did our homework. And my father had one rule: You get along with your teachers before you're going to get along with me. So, the teacher word was law. You couldn't argue with her. I was very respectful to them because they were smarter and (laughing) bigger. But the Army background did help a lot I think, especially when I got involved in the real world, the discipline part. And we were taught as kids about venereal disease, take care of your health, stuff like that. And I say the Army kids were probably the cleanest, most well groomed in the whole civilian population where we went to school. We were well liked at the school because we were brought up that way to be respectful to the faculty and of course that made you likeable automatically you know, because the civilian kids weren't that well-trained or that courteous. We had (laughs) a dance once a week at old Middletown High School up on the roof, an old tile roof. It had walls around it and all. They'd open that up for a dance once a week for the students. We had chaperones up there and all, and I got caught necking with one of the girls behind one of the ventilators one night (laughs). I closed that down. Even a hug and a kiss was forbidden back then. The Army also bussed us out there and the Army furnished transportation to some of the students who lived beyond where they had the transportation. So all and all, the Army brats were welcomed and liked because we were an asset to the area. And I don't remember any of us ever getting kicked out or

suspended for anything at all. Discipline was it. You're brought up with it. They bring a civilian kid in and tell him you gotta say "yes sir" "no sir" to everybody he talks to, he'll probably tell you to go jump in the lake. When you grow up that way you don't even think about it. I even had second lieutenant after my experience in O.C.S. with the jeep being blown up, come out to the outfit here, kids my age who knew five times as much about the Army as the officers were going to know, but we were still respectful toward them and I got a lot of good points over that. If I wanted a pass, if I wanted ten extra men for a detail, they'd go out and get them for me. If we didn't have enough in our outfit, they'd call them out of another outfit. And they knew that I knew what I was doing with the Army. I kept them out of trouble several times by telling some lieutenant, "Hey. This guy's a captain. You want to watch what you say because he's not going to like this or that or something else." I was like that with everybody. Even in the Army, when I was in myself, I had a jeep assigned to me of course because of my job as first sergeant. We had about sixty jeeps assigned to the outfit. We had, they call them weapons carriers in the ¾ ton truck with the big fat little tire on them. Today they got Hum-Vs and all that, but we didn't have those back then. But the jeep was very popular, and I had one assigned to me all the time. I even had a driver if I wanted one. When I went to town I drove myself. Around the post I had a driver. If I wanted to stop here for a minute and I couldn't park right there and there was a convoy coming I'd tell them: "Put it over in the grass or something." And I'd just take care of what I wanted. But, first sergeant is a good job, especially if you know what you're doing. I had the benefit of having grown up in it to teach me what to do. I just grew up where I came from.

Q: And when you look at the military that you grew up with compared to today's military, are there any, besides technology...

A: Well, technology is far superior to anything we had back then. As far as the rest of it, I think these guys are better trained and probably have a better outlook than the GI back in that day. Back then you had fellas getting in the Army because there was nothing else they could do. You didn't have the intellect or intelligence grade that you have today. Even a guys who finishes high school today and goes in the Army is smarter than recruits we had back then because they didn't have the... most went through one, two years of high school and then were out into the Army. It's more modern today. It's cleaner, better run, better managed, and of course the technical stuff is way more advanced than then. But I don't know how this modern day Army would have made out back then. There would have been a lot of conflict. Even officer back then, they grew up in the Army or got a field commission into battle. They could be eighth graders as far as they went in school and get a field commission and become an officer. Some of them didn't have the academic smarts of an officer and kind of messed up once in a while. Not the officers you have now, they had the benefit of growing up like that. Another funny thing when I was still in, limited service was in effect. They wouldn't send me home. I couldn't go in combat because of my busted up eardrum. They decided they needed some people trained in an Army of Occupation, which we thought we'd have over in Europe for the next one hundred years back at that time. So, they sent us to Wharton School in Philadelphia, part of Penn State. It was one of the finest business schools in the country, and they taught us everything about civilian rule, management, budget,

residential zone, business zone, sewer management, underground, the whole thing. How to run a town,, keep a town going like you're the town mayor, king, or something. And we finished that program and before we ever put into effect what they taught us (laughs) they decided to kill the program. I wound up with an MBA from Wharton School in Philadelphia, which was a prized thing there. And just at that time they ended the limited service too and were going to send us home. Price-Waterhouse was recruiting down there. It was a big auditing company. It still is, in New York. And they were looking for help, and they were offering \$30,000 a year right out of school, which back then was a fabulous income. And I was tempted, but I couldn't see myself sitting behind a desk so I just walked away from it. I knew some guys on the police force. They asked me to take the exam. I aced that of course. I had a bout 143 I.Q. reading, something like that. But I owe the Army a lot of what helped me make it through life.

Q: What would you tell future generations who wanted to learn more about Fort Hancock and the life here?

A: Well, there aren't going to be too many left (laughs) in another ten years that know anything Fort Hancock back then, unless you read what they've written or your recordings. Well, the people you talk to, like myself, who grew up around here or who were in the Army back in that time would be your best source of information. They had stenographers take down some of the lectures. A couple of them they videotaped. Videotape is so prevalent today. But unless you get fellas like myself that aren't going to live forever, I mean I don't know where you're going to get the information, the real knitty-gritty. Also, this railroad we had, the spur came in from right here to Seabright. All the way out here. There was a roundhouse here with a turntable and the engines got turned around and all that. They'd let us ride the train back and forth with all the freight that went up there for the service. I could ride in the engine car, steam engine, work the levers, make it go, and all that kind of stuff. And the train that went all through Seabright down toward Asbury was called the Seabright Express. One of the trains was named "The Broker," and it was mostly Wall Street people. If you saw your way to the Jersey City ferry terminal, you took the ferry across the river from Jersey City to New York City/Lower Manhattan. And it was almost all Wall Street people. And they started building the Turnpike in 1950, and they had a temporary railroad bridge built that they called Mainstreet Woodbridge. And the Seabright Broker was flying across that one night and the bridge gave way. Three or four cars tumbled on down the roadway. It killed quite a few people, and they changed the Seabright Railroad. It almost died because of that. I mean, that was the main train that went down that way. So, about two years later I think they closed that Seabright branch, and when they closed that the Army lost its access to the railroad here. And the railroad track came all the way down here, and it crossed over the main road coming in. It was an S-turn there, a real sharp S-turn, but since then they've kind of modified the roads a little bit. It's not the kind you dump over at 35 miles per hour like it used to be. They had a lot of soldiers dump their own cars over on that turn. Too much to drink or something like that. And the S-turn went something kind of like this. It was real sharp and the railroad went like that. So you had to cross the tracks right at that point. Now you had few (laughs) trains in accidents. Even though the freight train never went more than 40 miles per hour some drunk would

run into it anyway. The train was a big help out here with freight, ammunitions, and moving all the big stuff. And of course, for a kid to get up there in that steam engine and work those levers, that was living. I had a lot of advantages like that while growing up here in the Army. As far as people finding out what it was like, unless you talked to somebody that exactly lived here I don't know where you're going to find much history. Most of the history only goes back to World War II. People talk about the missiles and all that, but we didn't have the missiles back then. The SAM missiles, that was there. Those were the first ones they had out around here. They had them on top of Chapel Hill over in Middletown. They had them on Seneck Road where that big apartment house is, East Point, overlooking the river there. Also, back then they also had some cold winters. This bay used to freeze up. I have seen teams of mules with a wagon behind them, right out to the edge of the ice unloading boats when the boat couldn't get to the dock. Because a lot of Army supplies came in on these boats. I'm talking about...and it was cheap transportation because the Army already owned the boats. They sent them back and forth anyway. And wagons and mules would go right out to the edge of the ice and pick up three or four people. About three or four years ago the bay was frozen. I got pictures of it. This last time it froze over out here. Not as heavy as it used to, but I got pictures of that too. But the winters that we've had have been getting mild except for this past winter. I've seen below zero around here, in Middletown, but I haven't seen that for ten years around here. But certainly this winter really turned in to be a real winter. Anyone who had to be out in it knows that.

Q: Do you feel that the history of Sandy Hook and of Fort Hancock and all that went on should be taught to today's youth?

A: I think it ought to be a required course in your history classes. This was a major pint here, a major military facility in the early days. They studied the Revolution, the Civil War, and everything else. They ought to include this. Even if it wasn't at war, it was an important institution. Also, the Army is good for young people. In a lot of foreign countries they have to serve automatically for like a year, year and a half when you turn eighteen. I think that's good. Plus, you get benefits out of it. They pay for half your college and all that. You don't do it for nothing. Plus, you get paid while you're in it. As first sergeant I only got \$170 a month, and now a corporal gets about \$1,200 a month. You know, because he's got to live, pay today's expenses and all. But back then, \$170 a month, I was living like a king because the Army gave you everything: a uniform, place to sleep, eat, food (laughing). I even got a free ride on the train with my military police pass. But if anyone wants to know something about Fort Hancock history, do it like you're doing. Get it recorded, and get somebody to tell you what it was like living here. If you can imagine what it was like, it's nothing like hearing somebody who was out running around in the grass in his bare feet or climbing the trellis up to that window and finding the trellis missing. Any other questions?

Q: That's it for today. Thank you very much Mr. Hanna. I learned a lot, very interesting interview, and I'm very grateful that you took the time out to do this with me.

A: Well, I'm glad to be hear to give you the chance to hear some of the things. There's probably things I can't think of unless one question leads to another, you know?

Q: Right.

A: We were into our fair share of mischief over here too, and I got to know some of the GIs pretty well. They fixed my car up for me. My father had a liquor cabinet, and I would relieve that of a bottle of scotch once in a while to give my favorite mechanic, stuff like that. I learned how to... I don't know if you call it a bribe. Call it an expression of appreciation. I learned that early in life (laughing) and it served me in good stead right along.